

Businesses offering incentives for giving up tobacco during Great American Smokeout

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By Alisha George, Times Staff Writer |

Smokers will be given extra incentive to quit their habit this week.

Thursday is the 35th annual national Great American Smokeout, a day when people are encouraged to be smoke-free.

Dorothy Fox, spokeswoman for The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County, said the day is a great opportunity to bring to light the issue of smoking.

"I think it's a chance for family and friends to support each other in an effort to lead a healthier lifestyle," Fox said.

Fox said The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County invited all Healthy Dining Partner restaurants to offer a special for the day that features "cold turkey."

In addition to some restaurants, Carroll Hospital Center's cafeteria will feature a special, Fox said.

Jim Rowe, co-owner of The Buttersburg Inn in New Windsor, said his restaurant will feature a special for the important cause.

"I'm a former smoker, so I know it's hard to stop," Rowe said. "But it's important to give it a try."

He said people also need to realize the harmful affects of second-hand smoke, especially to children.

Harry's Main Street restaurant in Westminster is promising to give a free cold turkey sandwich to a smoker who turns in a partially used or unused pack of cigarettes.

"As I get older, I realize that your health is a very important thing," restaurant owner Harry Sirinakis said.

The restaurants will feature brochures from the American Cancer Society about the dangers of smoking and resources on how to quit. There will also be information about local quitting resources available at the Carroll County Health Department.

Trisha Wagman, patient educator at Carroll Hospital Center, said the hospital has several things going on for GASO day.

In the morning, there is a breakfast for associates who want to quit smoking for the day and their sponsors. There will be information available about how to quit smoking and a pledge they can sign to promise to at least quit for the day.

There will be walk-in clinics in the hospital's learning center from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. where those interested can meet with tobacco cessation counselors for information about quitting and acquire vouchers for free nicotine replacement therapy.

During the same time period, the hospital will have information available in its lobby with a place for smokers to turn in their cigarettes and receive a bottle of water and either sugar-free gum or candy in return.

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How to help quitters

- **Adopt a quitter:** Friends and family of smokers are always looking for ways to help those they care about quit. The Great American Smokeout is an opportunity to put those who are quitting for the day in touch with a support system to help them through it.
- **Trade in and trade up:** For those who are quitting for the day, offer a trade-in for their cigarettes, chew and lighters. Set up a station in recreation areas, dining facilities and other central locations and provide sugar-free candy, sandwiches, popcorn, bottles of water, sunflower seeds and other snacks.
- **Make survival kits:** Quitting is no joke, even for just a day. Arm GASO participants with "quit kits" to help them through the day. Include sugar-free gum, healthy snacks and information about how to start quitting and get through cravings.
- **Feed a quitter:** Most participants who are quitting for the day are going "cold turkey," so why not reward them with cold turkey sandwiches?
- **Get the word out:** Getting the word out about the GASO is crucial. Help by using bulletin boards, marquees, public address systems and regularly scheduled meetings to remind smokers of the approaching GASO. Visit www.ucanquit2.org for more free downloadable materials.

Legislation to change labels

The Food and Drug Administration is proposing to amend its regulations to add a new requirement for the display of health warnings on cigarette packages and in cigarette advertisements. The proposed rule would implement a provision of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (Tobacco Control Act) that requires the FDA to issue regulations requiring color graphics depicting the negative health consequences of smoking to accompany the nine new textual warning statements that will be required under the Tobacco Control Act.

The Tobacco Control Act amends the Federal Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act (FCLAA) to require each cigarette package and advertisement to bear one of nine new textual warning statements.

This proposed rule, once finalized, would specify the color graphics that must accompany each of the nine new textual warning statements.

The Tobacco Control Act requires FDA to issue final regulations requiring these color graphics by June 22, 2011. It also specifies that the requirement for the new health warnings on cigarette packages and advertisements will take effect 15 months after issuance of this final rule.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Food and Drug Administration.

Smokeout can help kick habit

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Editorial |

Initiatives offered today through the Carroll Hospital Center and The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll offer incentives to smokers who want to quit but have yet to take the plunge, or those who have tried unsuccessfully in the past to break the habit.

Today marks the 35th Great American Smokeout, a day designed to increase awareness of the harmful impact of smoking.

The Partnership of a Healthier Carroll has partnered with some area restaurants to offer a special for the day that features "cold turkey." The participating restaurants will also have on hand brochures from the American Cancer Society highlighting the dangers of smoking and ways to quit.

At Carroll Hospital Center, walk-in clinics are planned from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. where people can meet with counselors and get information about quitting. Vouchers for free nicotine replacement therapy will also be available.

In addition to these special activities, people interested in quitting who have insurance should check with their carrier, since most offer help in kicking the habit.

Quitting smoking isn't easy, so it is important that those trying do their homework. Get a friend who you can count on to support you, and tell other family and friends so they can be supportive as well. For some, talking with your doctor to find out alternatives may be a good idea. But whatever way you choose to try you should make sure you have a plan in place, set a date to quit and then work toward achieving your goal.

The Great American Smokeout is a good way for smokers to test the waters. Going cold turkey for a single day could show that quitting is possible, and even if those who quit today don't kick the habit entirely, the fact that they have gone the day without smoking could be incentive to put a plan together to free themselves of smoking.

According to the American cancer Society, 20 minutes after quitting your heart rate and blood pressure drops. Twelve hours after quitting the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal. Two weeks to three months after quitting your circulation improves and your lung function increases. One to nine months after quitting coughing and shortness of breath decreased and cilia, the tiny hair-like structures that move mucus out of the lungs, regain normal function in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs and reduce the risk of infection.

One year after quitting the excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's. Five years after quitting your stroke risk is reduced to that of a non-smoker five to 15 years after quitting. And 10 years after quitting the lung cancer death rate is about half that of a person who continues smoking.

The negative health impact of smoking has been well-documented, and every year more and more people take the first steps toward quitting. More many, the Great American Smokeout providing a jumping off point in their efforts. Hopefully, with the initiatives being offered, this year will see even more people take that first step toward a tobacco free life.